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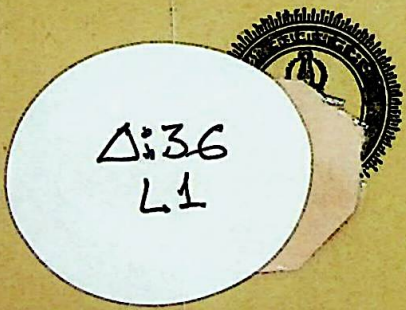

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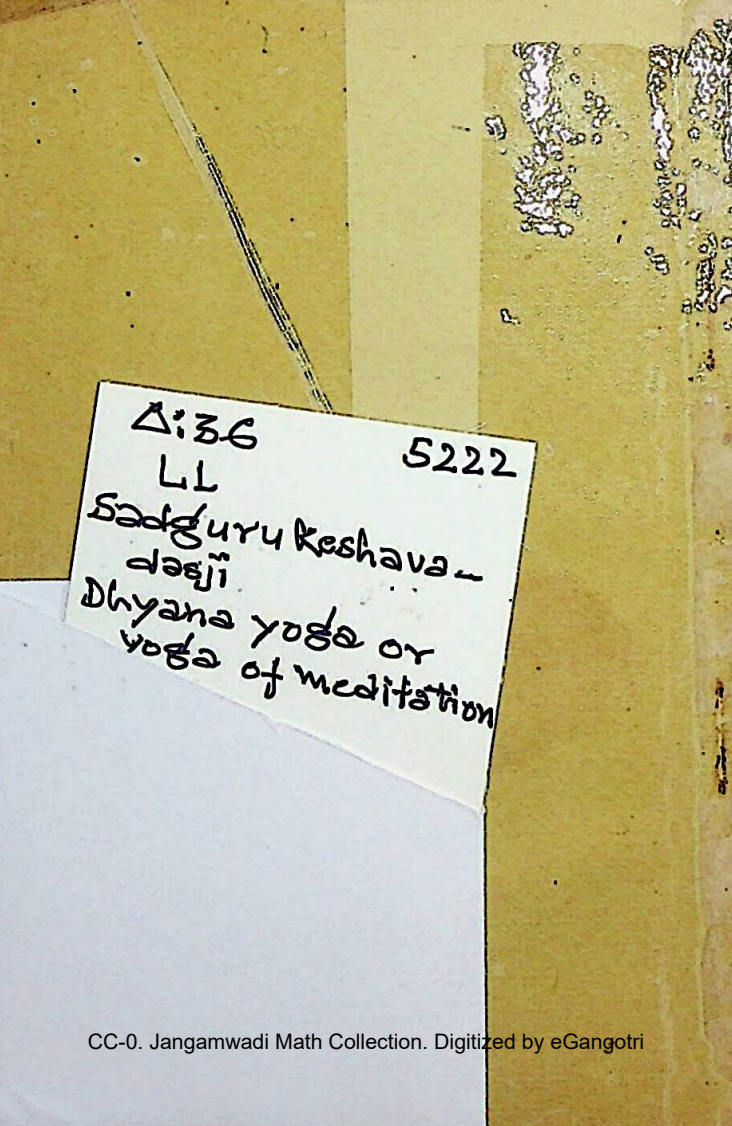

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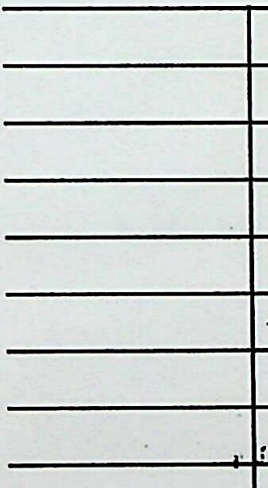

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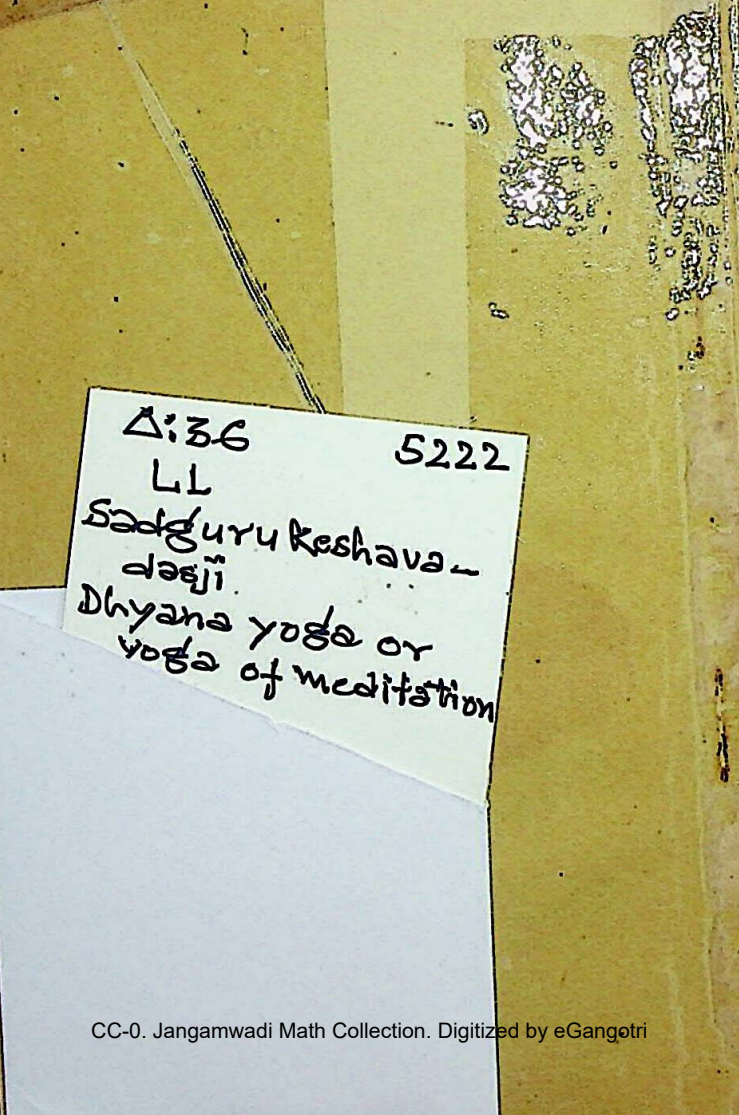

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Foreword

During my eighteen years' stay in San Francisco, engaged in promoting cultural understanding between America and Asia, I have sponsored many Indian scholars and spiritual leaders visiting this country. It would be no exaggeration to say that Sadguru Keshavadas is one of the finest and most forceful representatives of Indian culture that I have had the opportunity of inviting to this part of the world. In September, 1967, he gave a series of lectures at our San Francisco Ashram for about a week. His inspiring talks made an immediate hit. His lucid and dramatic exposition of the profound truths of Hindu mysticism evoked spontaneous applause, and struck a deep chord in the heart of the audience.

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After consulting with our Board of Directors I extended to Keshavadas a double invitation for one full semester in 1968 : an invitation from California Institute of Asian Studies as well as one from San Francisco Ashram. He graciously accepted the invitation.

So this year it has been a great pleasure to have him again with us, staying at our Ashram with his lovely wife. Everybody is happy that they could spend here this time four months, Sepetmber-December. Keshavadas's indefatiguable energy in sperading the light of truth and giving spiritual aid, comfort and guidance to innumerable seekers has filled our mind with great admiration. He has impressed the students of California Institute of Asain Studies as a competent authority on India's age-old tradition of devotional mysticism (Bhakti Marga). His scholarship embraces not only ancient and classical systems of thought but also

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such modern developments as Neo-Vedanta, Integral Yoga and the like.

In this book the author has clearly defined the meaning and the goal of meditation with utmost brevity. He has also given some detailed instruction about the actual practice of meditation, outlining a few well-tested methods and techniques.

Especially noteworthy is the fact that the author has emphasized meditation not as a means of acquiring transcendental peace away from life and society but as the art of living and acting in the world in tune with the Infinite. Properly understood, meditation is indeed the supreme method of dynamic self-integration. It brings to blossom the spiritual potential of man. It helps an individual to float upon the waters of life and social action like a beautiful lotus flower. A man of meditation can maintain his serene

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Two Words

In a world of turmoil when the mind is confused and the head becomes hot, people run after various medicines and drugs. Had they known there is a technique through which they could find the greatest peace in the midst of all activities, what a solace they would have found within themselves. The sages of the Himalayas found out this technique which gave them supreme illumination. All the great scriptures of ancient Hinduism speak at length the greatness of this meditation.

While I was teaching the technique of meditation at the San Francisco Ashram, many devotees requested me to write a book on the subject. Time being limited, I ventured to bring out this small volume which I wrote there. I have quoted the Gita and Upanishads

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to emphasize the greatness of meditation. A little practice of this must surely bring great strength and peace to the sincere practicant.

I am really grateful to Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri for writing a wonderful Foreword to this book. My blessings are to Sister Gita for editing this manuscript so promptly and beautifully. And I have to thank Sri Sudhindra Printing Press for bringing out this volume so neatly and promptly. Let God bless us all.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

— KESHAVADAS

Keshavashram International Centre,
4061 Chesapeake Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.
March, 1969.

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Sri Sadguru Bhadragiri
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OR
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Meditation is deep concentration. Yoga of meditation is the spiritual discipline of concentration on God. Meditation is fathoming the Unfathomable until It reveals Itself. Meditation is focussing the mental and intellectual energy toward one mantra or one thought power until that mantra reveals its secret. Meditation is the science of realization and the art of communion with God. Meditation is search after the Supreme Reality in the cavity of our heart. Meditation is the devotional offering of oneself to the Object of Meditation, i.e., God. Meditation is the struggle of the individual soul to realize and reach the Universal Soul. Meditation is the opening of our being for the direct influx of

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the Divine Light. Meditation is the discriminative self search. Meditation is the headlong plunge into the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness Meditation is the door to liberation. Meditation is the highest rung of the spritual ladder. Meditation leads to knowledge; knowlledge leads to love; love leads to union with God.

Meditation in the Bhagavad Gita : In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Sri Krishna enjoins the following rules for successful meditation :

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मन। :
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ।।

"In a clean spot on a firm seat with Kushagrass (darbhasana), a deer skin and a cloth spread thereon one below another (Kusha below, deer skin in the middle and cloth uppermost)neither very high nor very low one should sit".

Gita VI - 11

For meditation, seclusion is a necessary condition at least for beginners. The practicant

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should have been initiated by a competent teachear or Guru. He should be all by himsel alone, (ekaki). A clean spot should be selected. The aspirant should have no fear, anxiety, or concern whatsoever regarding the spot where he sits for meditation. In other words, it should be a safe place where he could be free from anxiety and spend as much time as he wants for his practice of meditation. If possible, it is good to have a meditation room in one's home. Of course, to meditate under a tree, on the bank of a river or lake, in a clean cave in the mountains or even on open ground, is very auspicious if those places are clean and calm. To have a meditation room in the house and sit there for meditation is the next alternative for practice. The room should be simple and clean. Any beautiful image of God, symbol, book or sacred object which inspires, elevates the mind, could be kept there. You could light the lamp and burn incence before you

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begin the practice. You could place fragrant flowers also at the feet of the Symbol, image or a photo of saints or masters. You could also gaze at a candle flame or a flower. All the external objects are only symbols of internal love for God and are there to lead one to the rich experience within; and with internal growth, the need for external symbols automatically becomes less. At the same time it should be kept in mind, that by internal growth, the external symbols become the living God, instead of mere images or symbols This is fine and wonderful as long as one experiences God internally and externally. If one experiences within, it is spontaneous and natural to experience God without too. It is a question of the vision with which a man sees things and not the objects themselves that matters.

The seat where you sit for meditation should be firm. If it is on the ground, it is well and good for it is firm. To severe the

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connection of the mind from the earth vibrations and disturbances, the deer skin was considered to be very auspicious by the yogis and Lord Krishna supports this view. A seat of Kusha grass (the holy grass used during the sacrifices to pour oblations) is also used by the great Rishis and they used to carry the deer skin and mat of Kusha grass wherever they went. The seat should not be too high or too low. To have the mat of Kusha grass below the deer skin in the middle and cloth uppermost makes a good seat. Those who cannot sit on the ground could spread these things over the seat where they sit. If they do not have these things, meditation need not be postponed; they could use a tiger skin or only a folded, thick cloth and sit upon that and begin the practice. When you have arranged the seat, the next question will be how one should sit upon it. Lord Krishna says,

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन॥

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"Keeping the trunk, head and neck straight and steady, remaining firm and looking at the tip of his nose, without looking in other directions", one should practice meditation. (Gita VI : 13)

Meditation is the seventh limb or step of the Eight-Limbed Yoga or Raja yoga of Sage Patanjali. After describing the ethical and moral principles to be followed by a practicant, Patanjali describes the necessity of Asana or posture. Even though Hatha Yoga deals elaborately on this subject of various postures, in Dhyana Yoga, a posture is stated as a necessary condition. The yogis mainly use the lotus posture for meditation "Sit on the floor; place the right foot on the left thigh and left foot on right thigh. The two heels should press against the lower part of the abdomen." This is the lotus posture. Keep the trunk, head and neck straight and steady and remain firm. Take a deep breath and be vigilant not to strain yourself. This Asana in

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meditation plays an important part, for it brings steadiness and firmness. Mudras, or postures of body and symbols bring fortitude. Apart from just doing these exercises, we should know the meaning of these postures and gestures which will lead us quickly toward strength of mind, light and quietude.

Lotus is the symbol of purity; its blossoming is really the blossoming of conciousness. Therefore, our spiritual centres or chakras are compared to lotuses. God, in the sahasrara chakra, is Light. Lotus blossoms by the light of the sun; so also our spiritual benefits are really very great. It has an esoteric meaning too. For, just as the lotus remains pure floating over the water; even though its cord is in the mire under the warter; similary, while living in the mire of the world amid waters o karma, the mind of a yogi should remain pure and untouched, floating over the water, turning toward the sun of knowledge to blossom into Cosmic Consciousness or transcen-

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dental experiences. The lotus posture brings equilibrium, and non-attachment if we practice meditation sitting in that posture.

Siddhasana is another good posture selected by the Siddhas or yogis for meditation. Those who cannot practice it or find too much difficulty remianing in Padmasana, could sit in Siddha posture for meditation. This is very simple but powerful. "Sit on the floor, cross your legs; place the right foot on the left thigh. Keepthe trunk, head and neck straight" Asana and breathing exercises purify the nerves and eliminate lethargy and inertia which lead many people into sleep instead of samadhi when they sit a long while for meditation. Asana and pranayama drive this hindrance caused by Tamoguna and bring steadiness of the mind. "Mukta-padmasana' and 'baddha-padmasana' also are very convenient asanas for meditation. In the former one, just sit cross legged, placing the right foot on the left thigh and the left on the right thigh; hands are crossed and placed on the

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thighs. Let the spine be erect and head straight with the chin on the breast. Now, fix the gaze at the tip of the nose. This is the muktapadmasana

In baddha-padmasana, remain steated cross legged just as above, cut let the right hand hold the right toe by passing the hand from behind the back, then the left hand to the left toe similarly. For those who can not even do these asanas they could just sit cross legged, placing their hands on their thighs keeping the spine and the head erect. Why should the trunk, head and neck be straight?

At the base of the spine lies the serpentine power or Kundalini Shakti which is dormant and coiled. During meditation, this power rises and like a serpent, raises its hood and pierces the circles or chakras whinc lie along he spinal column. By such piersing, it pierces the veil of ignorance on the one hand and brings various mystical experiences to man; on the other, it brings illumination when it reaches the sahasrapadma or the thousand

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petalled lotus in the brain. If we keep our trunk, head and neck erect, it helps the Kundalini pass smoothly through the spinal column or sushumna.

Apart from this, the Gita advises us to look at the tip of the nose. Why? There are many reasons. Fixing the gaze helps concentration of the mind. If we close our eyes for a long time during meditation and the mind is not fully aware all that time, until it merges in the super conscious state, then there is fear of inertia and sleep caused by Tamoguna; whereas, if you keep the eyes open, they see many things and the mind becomes unsteady and wavering, caused by Rajoguna. Therefore, neither closing the eyes fully nor keeping them wide open, you should keep them half closed and gaze with both eyes at the tip of your nose. This is the method of Sattvaguna. It causes neither inactivity nor activity, but gives tranqiulity,

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leading toward equanimity. Some yogis practice the other method of fixing their gaze in between the eyebrows. For most people, this may strain the eyes; but fixing the gaze at the tip of the nose should not be too difficult. If your mind is aware, you could close your eyes and fix your mind either in the heart's lotus or in between the eyebrows (Ajna chakra) or in the thousand petalled lotus. It is said in Raja Yoga, that by concentrating at the tip of your nose, you could gain the power of smelling the most fragrant flowers from any distance. Hatha Yoga says, that by gazing at the tip of the nose, the muscles of the eyes are strengthened eye sight improves and you will get powerful eyes that could calm men of ferocious nature. We should not, however, give more importance to any of these ordinary powers gained through such practices, even though they will follow us unsought, when we aim at meditation and realization of God.

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12

What next ? Lord Krishna says,

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रिय ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥

"And sitting on that seat, concentrating the mind and controlling the functions of the mind and the senses, he should practice yoga for self purification."

(Gita–VI–12)

According to yogis, the best time for meditation is 'Brahmi Muhurta' or the early hours of the morning between 3.45 a.m. and 5.30 a.m and when day breaks into night, between 6.30 p m. and 8.00 p.m. Apart from the spiritual significance, outer nature and the inside nature of a man remain calm, so that the great silence can be felt and meditated upon by the practicant during those hours. God in His attributeless state is recognized as the "Great Silence". One who can meditate on this great Silence really attains cosmic

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consciousness, for It silences the ego consciousness, suspends the dancing wavelets of the take of mind stuff (chitta) and makess man remain as 'pure being' which is 'chit' or consciousness.

Physiologically speaking, man breaths by both nostrils only during the early hours of the morning and early hours of the evening The rest of the day his breathing is not rhythmic. The one purpose of Hatha Yoga and pranayama is to m a k e breathing rhythmic so that the sun and moon nerves are balanced. If balanced properly, the breath awakens the hidden universal energy, the Kundalini, and allows man to take a leap into the Divine. Ha is sun; Tha is moon. Ha plus Tha (yoga) means the path of balance of the sun and moon nerves. These nerves have their exit in t h e two nostrils and breath exercises properly practiced purify all the nerves and nadis or

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subtle channels through which the spirtua energy moves in the body.

Man breaths with two nostrils during the sandhi or periods when day breaks into night and night into day. Therefore that time has been specified as auspicious for meditation. Of course, when one advances in such practice, one could meditate at any and all times. The suggestion given is especially for the practicants who practice "pranayama." This is mostly stressed for the students of Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Kriya Yoga and Laya Yoga. The major yogas like Bhakti, Jnana and Karma Yoga are for advanced yogis who never stop at the siddhis or miraculous powers but who aim for realization of God and Cosmic Consciousness.

As soon as one sits for the practice of meditation, one should not suppress thoughts nor impose a mantra on the wandering mind:

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The first few minutes, instead, could be spen for "observation." The intellect should be aware of the turbulent nature of the mind by letting the tenacious mind run wherever it wants. Keep the body in firm position as described earlier. If the mind runst oward very bad and filthy objects, then your intellect or higher mind should preach to the lower thus.

"O Mind, the things that you desire bring utter ruin. The objects to which you cling, entangle the soul. For momentary pleasure, everlasting peace will be gone; the happiness for which you run will bring an ocean of miseries; changing objects can never bring changeless joy; the unchangeable abode of peace is God. In Him lies everlasting happiness. So, O mind, return to your center."

In this way the higher mind or awareness

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in you should preach to the lower mind. This method of bringing the mind back to its centre is called 'Pratyahara' in RajaYoga and Vairagya (dispassion) in Bhakti Yoga. In Jnana Yoga, this is done by 'Nitya-nitya Viveka" or discrimination which distinguishes the Real from the unreal.

Once the mind is back to its center, not from pressure or compulsion b u t from discrimination and dispassion, then it very easily concentrates on any aspect of God to which it is directed. It is for this purpose that in Raja Yoga, yama (restraint), niyama or discipline, asana (posture) pranayama or control of life force and pratyahara or bringing the mind back to its center, have been enjoined as the prerequisites for practicing meditation. Yama, niyama, asana and pranayama are the four outerpr actices, and pratyahara is the beginning of the inner practice.

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Lord Krishna uses the term "Ekagra mana", or one-pointed mind, concentration on mantra or form, on attribute or great silence, colour, light or thought or anything that brings blessedness. Often the aspirant can see that his mind is easily concentrated when he chooses divine subjects or thoughts which naturally interest his mind. When he imposes alien subjects on his mind or attaches it to some thought without firm aith or devotion, then the mind runs amock and is never controlled. So, one should begin meditation with sone beautiful invocations or chant some prayers. In all the upanishads, the sages and their disciples used to begin their meditation by invocations with their study after meditation; they would also end their study with meditation and meditation with invocation. For example, the Taittiriya Upanishad begins with this invocation:

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Harih Aum, Sham no mitra Sham Varunah Sham no bhavathi Aryama, Sham no Indro Brahaspatih, Sham no Vishnur Urukramah, Namo Brahmane, Namasthe Vayo, Tvam eva Pratyaksham Brahmasi, Tvam eva Pratyaksham Brahma Vadishyami, Ritam Vadishyami, Satyam Vadishyami, Tan mam avatu Tad Vaktaram avatu avatu mam, avatu Vaktaram, Aum, Shantih, Shantih, Shantih.

"May we propitiate the sun God : may we propitiate the god of Waters ; may the God of Light be propitious to us ; may we propitiate Indra and Brihaspasti ; may Vishnu, the God of Preservation, be propitious to us. Salutations to Brahma, salutations to Thee, O Wind God; Thou art the perceptible God. Of Thee, O visible Reality, will I speak? I will speak of the right and of the Truth. May that great Truth protect me ; may that Truth protect the speaker ; let

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That guard the speaker, Om, peace, peace, peace.

Such invocations have immediate wonderful results of bringing the mind to exaltation which, because of the invoked blessings, becomes purified. The purified mind remains one-pointed on the thought or object of meditation. It should be remembered here, that in the initial stages of the practice of meditation, many bad thoughts, evil thoughts unthought and unsought, may come to the surface. The aspirant should not feel discouraged or disgusted over these nor give up the practice. It is a natural phenomena in meditation that all the evil thoughts, instincts, hallucinations, illusions, delusions and dark powers hidden in our inner consciousness come to the surface before they die in totality. At this stage, meditation purifies the intrenal instruments called mind, intellect, ego and the mind stuff. It is only

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after such purification that the seed of the mantra can be safely sown in the heart's soil to be watered by repeated meditation unitl it yields the fruit of spiritual realization or mystic union of soul and God. So, all these processes are essential in this stage called Dharana or concentration which is the method of self-purification.

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